

BLM WH&B NEWS



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Wild Horse Adoption Returns to Rio Grande Valley!

Still dreaming of adopting your own Wild Horse? Turn that dream into a reality!

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) returns to the Rio Grande Valley on January 28-29 with 90 spectacular horses available for adoption at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show Arena in Mercedes. The majority of the weanlings available for adoption were born in captivity on BLM-contracted pastures in Oklahoma and Kansas; the studs and mares were gathered from Nevada herds. Burros will not be available at this time.

These animals and their historic herds are truly unique animals that embody the best characteristics of endurance and agility. Throughout the 30-plus-year BLM program, adopted horses have found their way not only into the hearts of thousands of recreational riders, but into show arenas in both Western and English specialties.

“The animals are noted for their endurance, sure-footedness, and strong sense of loyalty to their caretaker,” says Bob Mitchell, Wild Horse and Burro Manager.

Preview of all animals available for adoption begins Jan 27 from 4 – 6 p.m. Doors open at 8 a.m. the remainder of the weekend. The competitive bid adoption begins on Friday, Jan 28, at 10 a.m. Following the initial competitive bid, walk-up adoptions will be held throughout the weekend until noon on Saturday, Jan 29. The minimum adoption fee is \$125 per animal to qualified adopters.

To qualify to adopt at the event, bidders must be at least 18 years of age, with no record of animal abuse. In addition, adopters must have specific facilities and can adopt no more than four animals. All animals **must be loaded** in a covered trailer with solid walls and floors – no drop ramp trailers.

This event presents an opportunity for the general public to participate in the adoption process and share a part of their American heritage. All of the wild horses and burros are gathered from many different herd management areas throughout California, Oregon, Nevada, New Mexico, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. The BLM has placed more than 203,000 horses in approved homes across the country.

For more information on the Mercedes adoption, call **866-4-Mustangs**, or visit www.wildhorseandburro.gov.

Directions to Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show Arena: Travel US Highway 83 to Mercedes (located in the central valley). Take the Mercedes Business District Exit (#491). Travel north on Texas Avenue, the entrance will be straight ahead.

Media Activities:

- Excellent Photo Opportunities starting **Thursday** morning, 8 a.m. See wild horses as they arrive at the site.
- Interview past adopters.
- Meet BLM mascots – Chester and Radar
- Follow an adopter through the process from registration to loading their adopted animal into a trailer for the ride home Friday through Sun
- Photograph wild horses and burros available for adoption, talk with past adopters about their experience all weekend
- Interview BLM Wild Horse and Burro Specialists about the history of the program, and find out what qualifies as a good home

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for managing the nation's public lands. With the passage of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, the Bureau gained the responsibility to care for wild horses and burros on these lands in harmony with other natural resources. When an over-population of wild horses and burros exists on these public lands, some animals are removed and offered to the general public for adoption.